

Coding

The code, the backbone of your website, needs to be clean and efficient. Messy code will bring your website's rankings down and result in slower load times for your visitors. Usually, your website visitors won't see the code, but search engine spiders will see it all. Don't cut corners. Ensure all the code is up to date, and includes proper meta tags, headers, and descriptions.

Content

This is what your customers will see; the front-end text copy, images, and videos that are on your website. The content of your website is the most important part of proper SEO, because search engines are constantly changing their algorithms to ensure they're delivering search results with the most helpful and accurate content.

Your content should be fresh and engaging. Don't make the mistake of writing purely "for the search engines" by stuffing unnatural keywords into the content and other old tricks of the trade that no longer work.

Content should target topics you want to rank for, but it needs to be natural and fresh. Google especially likes to favor pages and posts that have been recently created or updated, which is one of the many reasons I always recommend businesses maintain an active blog.

Off-Site SEO

Once your website is structured correctly and contains excellent content, it's time to develop and execute a solid off-site SEO strategy. Off-site SEO consists of factors that affect your search engine rankings which are not on your website itself. Here's a look at the main factors of off-site SEO.

Inbound Links

Links from other sites on the internet come in many different shapes and sizes. A link is simply a clickable word, phrase, image, or button that directs you to another URL. Think of each link as a vote for your website's credibility, vouching for your worthiness to rank highly in search results.

But not all links are created equal. Just as you'd trust your best friend's opinion about something more than you'd trust a random stranger's, links from well-known

and highly trusted, authoritative websites count for much more than links from unknown or untrusted websites.

So, thousands of links aren't the answer, contrary to what many untrustworthy "SEO companies" and "SEO professionals" will often tell you. In order to rank well consistently in the search engines, you don't need a high quantity of links; you need high quality links from authority websites. There are many ways this can be done, but it takes time. We'll get more into that later, though.

Besides giving you 'votes' to help your site rank better, good inbound links will also drive free, high-quality traffic to your website. A link to your website that's created today, if on a relevant site with the right audience, will still be delivering you targeted customers well into the future without any work or effort on your part. It doesn't get any better than that.

Social Signals

Social media is much more important as a ranking signal now than it was even just a few years ago, and that trend is likely to continue. Google and other search engines take into account (pretty highly) your social media influence. Not only does your activity in social media improve your search engine rankings, but social media itself can be an excellent way to build your brand, reach new audiences, and drive potential customers.

Google and Bing both look for what we call social media signals, which are simply activities including Twitter tweets, Facebook likes, Google +1's, social bookmarks, and much more. Each signal is an indication to search engines that your content is high-quality and deserves to appear highly in search results.

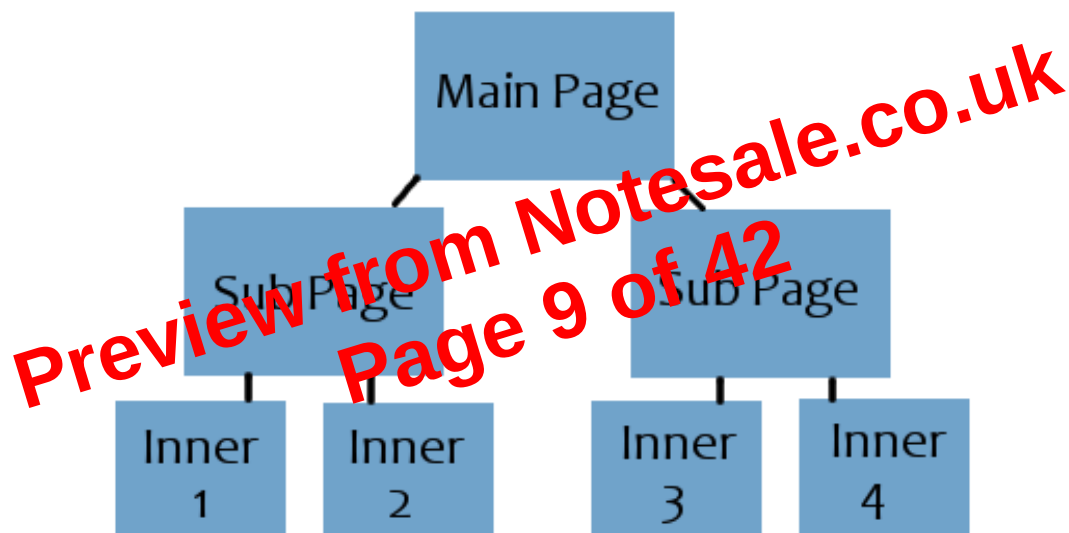
Let's take an example. If you publish an exceptionally well-done infographic highlighting some interesting data, you want people to know about it, and you want search engines to know that they should rank it highly in search results. If you tweet a link to you it from your company Twitter account, and 100 of your followers retweet it, then 100 of each of their followers retweet the link, you have a wave of retweets that search engines notice. All those retweets are signals (social signals) that your infographic must be exceptionally awesome, or else all these people wouldn't be tweeting about it. It's "social proof" that your infographic is helpful and useful, and search engines only want to display really great pages in their search results. This social proof is a reassurance to the search engines that your infographic will deliver a positive user experience.

Website Structure, Content Planning & Content Marketing

We touched on the topic of website structure when we discussed on-site SEO factors. But we didn't really go into much detail, so here we go. It might seem like there's a lot to learn here, and there is, but it's easier than you think.

Navigation

Navigation is at the core of your website structure. Here's an example of very basic navigation.



The main page feeds to sub-pages or different sections. Then each of those sections are linked to even deeper pages that go into more detail.

Of course, there are many more ways a website can be set up, but keeping it simple is helpful for optimizing your user experience, and that will reflect positively on your search engine rankings. However your website's navigation is designed, it should provide a clear and easy path for the search engines and your visitors to follow.

There are many more sites that can be grouped by income, education, how likely they are to share video, and much more. Take your time and use this information to select the most appropriate ones to begin with.

Setting Up Social Media Sites & Integrating Them

After you've chosen which sites you're going to use, you need to create accounts on them. One of the first things you should do is go to Knowem.com and input a username you'd like to use on your social profiles. Ideally, this should be your brand or company name. Knowem will then search over 500 different social sites, checking if that username is available on each one. Why is this important?

Well, you don't want to become known as StevesAutoRepair on several sites, only to have to use AutoRepairBySteve on others. A consistent username helps you achieve brand consistency, so that you're easily recognizable and findable.

Get Social on Your Website

The goal should be for your readers, fans and customers to be able to easily share your content, and interact with you in social media. To achieve this, include social "follow us" icons to allow your visitors to easily connect with your brand. Ideally, these icons should be displayed on every page of your website, and they are commonly found in the upper right sidebar or header.

Additionally, include "share" buttons on your blog posts to allow readers to easily and instantly share your content with others.

Create a Brand Strategy and ERT (Emergency Response Team)

No company is 100% safe from being attacked in social media channels, so prepare for it before it happens. Whether it's a customer complaint or someone making false claims about your company, there should be a plan for how to handle it. Who will be the voice for your company? Make sure they understand how to handle such situations professionally. Poor, unprofessional responses in social media can lead to huge damage to your brand image.

Industry Research

Before interacting in social media, do your homework. What do I mean by that? Find some authority figures in your industry on the social sites you're going to use. Who are the influencers in your industry? Who has the most reach? Who are the thought leaders?

the domain to view the domain registry information. To perform a “Whois” lookup, simply visit Google and search for “whois lookup” and you’ll find plenty of websites that will facilitate the process for you.

Step 4. Contact each blog owner and politely introduce yourself, explain why you’re reaching out, and request the opportunity to contribute to their blog as a guest contributor.

Here’s a sample email template you can use for this process:

Subject: you should blog about [insert your guest blog post topic]

[insert their first name], as an avid reader of [insert their site name], I would love to read about [insert guest blog post topic], and I think your other readers would as well.

Your articles on [insert existing post from their website #1, insert existing post from their website #2, and insert existing post from their website #3] are great, but I think you can tie it all together by blogging on [insert guest blog post topic].

I know you are probably busy and won’t have time to write about it, so I’m going to make you an offer you can’t refuse. ;) How about I write it for you? Don’t worry, I’m a great blogger and have had my posts featured on [insert previous guest post URL #1] and [insert previous guest post URL #2].

Let me know if you are interested! I already know your blogging style, plus I understand what your readers love... as I am one. ;)

Look forward to hearing from you,
[insert your name]

Pro Tip: When sending out these emails, I highly recommend you download and install [Boomerang for Gmail](#), which is a handy plugin that allows you to automatically schedule follow-up reminders if you don’t hear back from someone. This will help to ensure that your message doesn’t fall through the cracks.

Step 5. Hopefully, you’ll get some positive replies from website owners or editors. When you do, start writing a super-awesome, insightful, helpful article. Once you’re finished and proud of it, send it to the publisher for review and approval.

Depending on the publisher, they will allow you to include a link to your

Get Citations, Lots of Them

Citations are mentions of your business NAP (name, address, phone number) on other websites. They are like inbound links, but for local SEO (they have no effect on national SEO rankings). For maximum effect, a citation should be an exact match for how everything is listed on your Google+ Local page. And I mean exactly, down to how the area code in your phone is displayed (dashes or parentheses?).

Yext is the best and easiest way to get these citations initially. After you complete the Yext listings, get new citations from other sources on an ongoing basis. I recommend the White Spark local citation finder tool for ongoing citation building. You can check it out here: <https://www.whitespark.ca/local-citation-finder>

Get Reviews on your Google+ Local Page

Continually work at getting customer reviews on your Google+ Local page. The more positive reviews you get, the better your local search results will be.

Preview from Notesale.co.uk
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Staying Safe from Search Engine Algorithm Changes

In the online marketing world, things change constantly. SEO professionals have to be on their toes 24/7, always watching, listening, reading, and preparing for potential changes that could occur.

The past couple years have been a roller coaster ride for SEO professionals. Some were ready for the algorithm changes that occurred over that timespan which changed the industry, while many were completely caught off guard.

Don't let that happen to you. Make time to keep up with changes in the industry, or hire someone who specializes in it. Here's a glimpse into some of the recent changes unleashed by Google over the course of 2011 and 2012.

Google Panda

Google's "Panda" algorithm update targeted sites with low quality on-site content; even huge sites with thousands of pages that long enjoyed top rankings were severely affected.

Business sites weren't exempt, either. In fact, there was one furniture store that offered a \$25,000 reward for anyone who could recover their site's rankings and traffic to their pre-Panda levels.

Since Panda's original launch in February of 2011, there have been numerous updates to the algorithm. The 24th official Panda algorithm update was launched on January 22nd of 2013, which is the most recent as of the writing of this book. You can track Google's algorithm update history at SEOMoz here:

<http://www.seomoz.org/google-algorithm-change>

How to Avoid the Panda Algorithm

Google doesn't give definite answers very often; as a result, much of what an SEO professional does is research and testing. This is the only way to get real answers. With that said, here are some tips that will help you stay out of Panda's way: